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Chairman: Mr. Kuchinsky ..... (Ukraine)
later: Ms. Groux (Vice-Chairman) ..... (Switzerland)

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* Items which the Committee has decided to consider together.

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 96: Crime prevention and criminal justice (A/59/77, A/59/123-E/2004/90, A/59/175, A/59/187, A/59/203, A/59/204, A/59/205, A/59/383-S/2004/758, A/C.3/59/L.3 and A/C.3/59/L.4)

Agenda item 97: International drug control (A/59/124-S/2004/532 and A/59/188)

1. **The Chairman** congratulated Wangari Maathai, from Kenya, who had been awarded the 2004 Nobel Peace Prize for her work within the Green Belt Movement in favour of the environment in Africa. He then offered his condolences to the families of the victims of the horrendous attacks that had occurred the previous day near the Egyptian border with Israel, which had killed dozens of people and injured more than 100 — mostly Israelis, but also Egyptians and other nationals. He trusted that the perpetrators of those acts would be brought to justice

2. **Mr. Costa** (Executive Director, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)), introducing the two agenda items, highlighted the importance of a common action uniting countries, their peoples and institutions, because organized crime and related offences had dire consequences for the mission of the United Nations and for all people as individuals or as representatives of a country or an organization. The globalization of organized crime rivalled the globalization of trade, finance and communications. In the same way as legitimate enterprises, criminal organizations had exploited the opening up of borders and the new technologies to extend their production and distribution networks throughout the world.

3. Through their many intermediaries, the major traffickers transferred their resources using the financial system or, when that was not possible, by exploiting the weaknesses of the system that controlled international trade. Currently, corruption cost societies a trillion dollars every year. Fraud and corruption, the most insidious and most destructive forms of criminal behaviour, destroyed national economies, undermined development and broke the bond of trust between citizens and Governments, and it was the poorest communities that were the principal victims. Further "collateral damage" related to corruption was linked to the fact that, at times, the authorities allowed terrorist or traffickers to act, with all the implied risks. The "dirty dollars" did not purchase infrastructure, food or capital investment; the product of crime financed terrorism and the luxurious lifestyles of traffickers, while ordinary people did not have the money for food, health care or education. "Dirty money" was reinvested in outwardly legitimate enterprises, in a grey zone where lawful activities mingled with heinous behaviour.

4. International peace could not be achieved, development could not be sustained and justice could not prevail if societies were contaminated by illicit activities; if the wealth of nations was siphoned off via fraud and corruption and if terrorists were permitted to "kidnap" national politics and if criminal organizations were allowed to jeopardize the future of today's youth, victims of societies that held out no hope. In his report on the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration (A/59/282), the Secretary-General had noted the dangers that threatened not only peace and development, but also human rights, democracy and good governance.

5. Drug-trafficking imprisoned millions at both ends of the chain — farmers on the supply side and addicts on the demand side — and led to the misery of millions of persons, while ensuring a lavish lifestyle for the criminal intermediaries. With regard to human trafficking, far from having disappeared, slavery was alive and well in the twenty-first century. In 2004, 1 million persons, mainly women and children, would be victims of prostitution, pornography and other offences, whose perpetrators were totally devoid of human decency. Migrants seeking a better life were duped of their few possessions by traffickers, who in many cases abandoned them at sea or in a desert, condemning them to certain death. Unfortunately, unlike terrorism, human trafficking was a "silent crime" with no media coverage unless disaster struck. Yet the damage it caused was no less real than that inflicted by drug-trafficking, firearms-smuggling or terrorism. The latter was no longer national, but international. It no longer targeted the State and its representatives but rather individuals and civilians, and it did not respect any religion, or make any exception, while its ideological roots were much more complex than in the past.

6. Even though people might be aware of the threat that each of those crimes represented individually, they were perhaps oblivious to the danger that the crimes constituted collectively and through their interaction.

7. It was urgent to move from analysis to action and, to that end, the international community fortunately had several instruments that provided it with the force and legitimacy of international law: the three international drug control conventions; the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, which had just entered into force, and its three supplementary instruments — the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Air and Sea, and the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, although the latter had not been ratified; the United Nations Convention against Corruption, signed by more than 110 countries; and the 12 international instruments on terrorism. Those texts gave States contractual obligations to work together and provided them with the conceptual and logistic support they needed to focus on prevention, which was always preferable to confronting a problem after the fact. That was encouraging, but much remained to be done. Many States had already allocated significant resources to law enforcement agencies to bolster security against organized crime. At the same time, States had an obligation and an opportunity to help those countries in need to reconstruct their civil societies in ways that made them less vulnerable to criminal exploitation or terrorist operations. Greater economic growth, expanded health care, improvements in education, and a culture that respected and valued individuals for their differences as well as for their strengths, were defences against criminal and terrorist operations.

8. UNODC was more than ever committed to playing its part in fighting organized crime in all its manifestations. In 2003 the Office had been reorganized and had presented a consolidated budget for 2004-2005. With a view to rationalization, it had initiated reforms in the areas of human resources, finances and information technology and had adopted new priorities with the focus on an integrated approach to drug trafficking and criminality as well as on prevention. It had also recently launched an integrity and transparency initiative and had submitted its contribution to the United Nations strategic framework for the period 2006-2007; its plan provided an integrated vision of its future direction, with clear lines of accountability for core aspects of its mission.

9. The research and analysis services of the Office had reported, in particular in the World Drug Report, on notable improvements in drug trends worldwide. The heroin market remained stable with a continued decline of cultivation and production in south-east Asia and the Andean nations which were traditional sources of heroin and cocaine, respectively. Afghanistan remained a source of concern and the most recent survey by the Office indicated negative trends. However, that country's counter-narcotics strategy still seemed valid; a time frame of 10 years to eliminate the problem still seemed to be appropriate and the determination of President Karzai was encouraging. The Office, which had a large portfolio of activities in Afghanistan, was also preparing new initiatives to strengthen capacities for investigation, prosecution and incarceration and to promote public awareness of the fact that opium was not an "El Dorado" but a national security threat. On the eve of the historic presidential election in Afghanistan, he called on all countries to support the Afghan Government's firm commitment to eliminating opium poppy cultivation.

10. The market for amphetamine-type stimulants had stabilized: production was not increasing around the globe as had been feared and fewer and fewer people from all demographic groups were buying such substances. If that trend were confirmed, it would represent a significant breakthrough in drug control. While cannabis accounted for much of the drug treatment demand in Africa (65 per cent), addiction to opioids remained the most serious problem worldwide. In Asia, for example, opioid addiction accounted for 67 per cent of the demand for drug treatment. Another troubling trend was the spread of HIV/AIDS through drug injection: 13 million intravenous drug users were concentrated in eastern and central Europe, and in south and south-east Asia, a continent that deserved particular attention. The Office would revisit those trends in the context of the work of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs in March 2005, in the light of the goals established by the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem, held in 1998.

11. Returning to the available arsenal of legal instruments, he said that the legal experts of the Office were helping the countries interested in accelerating the ratification and implementation of the United Nations conventions against organized crime, corruption and terrorism.

12. Operationally, UNODC was implementing a range of global programmes and country projects, in particular in the fields of legislative assistance and capacity-building on drugs, crime and terrorism in the countries of west and central Asia, east Asia, the Andes, eastern Europe and Africa. Thanks to the donor community, new programmes had also been launched ranging from the creation of a regional information and coordination centre for central Asia to a container programme in major seaports in Africa, Asia and Latin America, which were often used as illicit trafficking hubs, in order to disrupt the flow of illicit commodities and undocumented aliens. The Paris Pact initiative had resulted in improved border control measures against heroin trafficking in central and west Asia, as well as in the Russian Federation and the Balkans. Lastly, the Global Programme against Terrorism was in its second year of implementation and the report submitted to the Committee (A/59/187) showed that the links between terrorism and other forms of crime were strong and deep. UNODC had provided training on the provisions of Security Council resolution 1373 (2001) for more than 500 lawmakers and criminal justice officials from over 80 countries.

13. UNODC was currently operating with a budget of $100 million and 500 dedicated staff and was determined to increase its efforts to leverage its resources by inviting other institutions and major donor countries to increase their contributions since it could not hope on its own to overcome the evils it was combating. In April 2004, the Office had hosted the spring meeting of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) which had endorsed a plan of action on the role of the United Nations system in combating organized crime and corruption based on a UNODC concept paper containing a set of concrete actions. At the Global Compact Leaders Summit in June 2004, the chief executive officers of some 1,700 corporations had agreed to add anticorruption to its platform which already supported the protection of human rights, the elimination of child labour and the preservation of the environment. The Office was currently working on a strategic paper which would clarify the procedures for a partnership with businesses and other relevant organizations. Since 1 July 2004, UNODC had been chairing the UN/AIDS Committee of Co-sponsoring Organizations; it was continuing to support activities, in particular the WHO 3 by 5 initiative and the UNESCO initiative on prevention and education, and was working closely with its partners in addressing issues relating to the transmission of HIV/AIDS among intravenous drug users, especially users in prison, and other victims of drug trafficking and of human trafficking. 21 July 2004 had been an important day for UNODC: following a thorough process of consultation, it had concluded a new partnership with some of the major funding institutions of the world, in particular the World Bank, with a view to working together in several countries on themes such as money-laundering, terrorist financing, corruption, HIV/AIDS and alternative livelihoods. At the invitation of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, established by the Secretary-General, UNODC had provided an overview of its work which had led to a very productive discussion on the ways in which drugs, crime, corruption and terrorism undermined global action for peace and security.

14. In conclusion, he said that UNODC was attempting to reposition its action in ways that could shape the global agenda, in which context the involvement of so many partners and supporters in the fight against drugs, crime and terrorism was vital to its future. Its objective was to strengthen those partnerships in order to become a catalyst for the kind of change that was needed to build a world in which peace, security and justice were no longer the exception, but the rule.

15. **Ms. Faye** (Senegal), agreeing with the Executive Director that the fight against corruption required a great deal of effort and energy, pointed out that corruption particularly affected the developing countries where poverty was an aggravating factor. In Africa the same phenomenon also extended to the public sector and was constantly on the increase. Her delegation asked what action was envisaged by UNODC to combat and control the transfer of funds of unlawful origin and asked for some specific examples of the strategy in place. The Mexico Conference had ended with the adoption of the United Nations Convention against Corruption and it was now time to take action to ensure the entry into force of that instrument.

16. **Ms. Bakker** (Netherlands), recalling that combating terrorism was now an important component of crime prevention and criminal justice, asked how Mr. Costa saw the cooperation between his Office and the Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC) developing. She also wondered what steps the Office had taken to

encourage those countries that had not yet done so to sign, ratify or implement the 12 conventions and protocols on terrorism and how the Office cooperated with other United Nations bodies on the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms. Lastly, she asked what had been the impact of the measures taken by the Office in Central Asia to curb the trafficking of heroin produced in Afghanistan and what preventive and awareness-raising activities on HIV/AIDS were being carried out in Central Asia with drug addicts.

17. **Mr. Costa** (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime), replying to the questions put by the delegation of Senegal, referred to the provisions of the United Nations Convention against Corruption and the four principles on which it was based (prevention, criminalization, recovery of assets and legal assistance) and highlighted the stipulations on bank secrecy contained in the text. More than 110 countries had signed the Convention since its adoption, which gave cause for hope that it would be opened for ratification during the next 12 to 15 months. As to the concrete action taken, the Office was not simply awaiting the Convention's entry into force but had implemented the Global Programme against Corruption, under which a range of activities focusing on the implementation of the Convention had already been conducted. Such activities were provided for under articles 7 to 18 as preventive measures, and could commence without the entry into force of the Convention itself: selective screening and financial disclosure for public officials, establishment of official selection criteria and rules for tendering for and awarding construction contracts, and the drafting of guidelines for the funding of political parties and election candidates.

18. The representative of the Netherlands had been right to speak of a new division of labour arising out of the establishment of CTC. That Committee was responsible for identifying the areas where work was needed, while the necessary technical assistance was provided by the Terrorism Prevention Branch of his Office. In his view, that arrangement could be maintained in the future. He recalled that CTC was empowered to identify institutions around the world that could discharge the technical assistance programme equally effectively, since his Office could not do everything. Building on the experience gained following the adoption of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, the Office could assist Governments in developing their own legislation after having ratified a convention; it would like to do the same in many other areas, including combating of money-laundering and sharing of information between institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and Interpol, inter alia. CTC could motivate those institutions to become involved.

19. With regard to the steps taken to encourage countries to sign, ratify or implement the 12 conventions and protocols on terrorism, he said his Office had some 30 years' experience in that area. He wished to take the opportunity to remind members of the Third Committee that only 66 countries had ratified and implemented the 12 instruments; he hoped as many countries as possible would ratify them in order to prevent terrorists using some of them as a safe haven.

20. With regard to the protection of human rights, he acknowledged that many countries had confronted that problem in their efforts to combat terrorism. He had been in the habit of consulting the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq, the late Mr. Sergio Vieira de Mello, on steps taken by the Office, until Mr. de Mello's tragic death. He was sure he would be able to do the same with the new United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and pointed out that successful action had been taken in Africa and Asia to combine counter-terrorist measures and the protection of human rights.

21. With regard to heroin from Afghanistan, everything possible was being done to curb trafficking between that country and the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and Western Europe. It was no easy task, however, for the traffickers had opened new routes through Central Asia to the Russian Federation and other CIS countries. Increased opium production had generated additional revenues that were being used by the traffickers to find new routes. The Paris Pact was concerned with concrete measures with regard to borders and the relevant agencies, and with consideration of the initiatives taken in various countries to see whether they were effective. That was a long-term exercise and a process of learning by doing, and one that had shown not only that border guards were corrupt but also that institutions were not always effective. Corruption was the driving force behind trafficking and it had to be dealt with in order to put a stop to trafficking. The Paris Pact did not tackle that problem directly but

prompted countries to develop new initiatives in that regard.

22. The demand for drugs in Central Asia was indeed growing, since traffickers had found new markets there. At the same time, in the region and in some CIS countries, there had been a rise in cases of HIV/AIDS linked to intravenous drug injection. He thanked the Government of the Russian Federation for having agreed to host the next meeting of the Committee of Co-Sponsoring Organizations, at which the ministers of health, justice and the interior of the CIS countries would attempt to break the vicious circle of drug addiction and HIV/AIDS.

23. **Ms. Noman** (Yemen) asked what steps the Office was taking to deal with groups that used the proceeds of drug trafficking for political ends.

24. **Mr. Xie Bohua** (China) stressed the importance of international cooperation and asked whether UNODC cooperated with Interpol and, if so, in what areas.

25. **Mr. Costa** (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime) said drug trafficking generated significant revenues worldwide and sometimes led to collusion at the political level, particularly on a regional scale, and with the private sector. Revenue from illegal activities was very often used to fund legal activities and the situation became far from clear. In many societies, corruption was a state of mind, which influenced behaviour not only among officials but also within the private sector. The courage had to be found to address that situation, not necessarily through law-enforcement measures, which were not always appropriate, but by creating civil society groups that would enable society as a whole to react and contain the consequences of drug trafficking and crime.

26. His Office did indeed cooperate with Interpol but, unlike Interpol, it was not a law-enforcement agency. It supported measures to contain both supply and demand. His Office met and consulted frequently with Interpol, particularly within the framework of the Paris Pact. Alongside Interpol's international action, his Office had established national drug control agencies in many countries, particularly in Central Asia and most recently in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan; others were soon to open in Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan. The scope of that work was specifically national but, with the support of Interpol, UNODC intended to create regional intelligence bureaux.

27. **Ms. Ahmed** (Sudan) reiterated her delegation's interest in UNODC's action and recalled the important meeting of the countries of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), held in Khartoum in January 2004. She asked what position the Office took on the legalization of certain narcotics, including cocaine, and in what way such legalization might affect its mandate.

28. **Ms. Abeysekera** (Sri Lanka) asked what was the position of the Office and of the international community concerning substitute crops in cannabis-growing areas.

29. **Mr. Reyes** (Cuba) asked what percentage of human and financial resources was devoted directly to repression programmes and prevention measures targeting young people, and to education. He also requested information as to the usefulness of unilateral "certificate of good conduct" measures in the context of multilateral cooperation. Lastly, he asked what was the Office's position concerning international military operations conducted unilaterally in the name of combating transnational crime, and whether such actions might in the long term prove counterproductive in terms of international cooperation in that field.

30. **Mr. Costa** (Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime) recalled that the Office was endeavouring to boost its activities in Africa, which had often been neglected by the international community in relation to the fight against drugs, crime and terrorism. That was no doubt because Africa was less affected by drug addiction and trafficking, although the situation was changing. It would be a mistake to think that Africa needed no attention in that respect. The Office had launched an initiative which, he hoped, would lead to round-table discussions in the spring of 2005, and these should be favourable to appeals for contributions. The discussions would focus on crime, drugs and terrorism as major obstacles to development in Africa. As for the "legalization of drugs" mentioned by the representative of Sudan, it was more a gradual decriminalization of drug abuse in certain parts of the world, and in no case would it apply to trafficking. The Office believed that it might be an appropriate response to the problem; drug addicts were not criminals but people needing medical help and reintegration into society. While some countries, particularly in Europe, had been permissive in the past, they were now retreating from

that position and applying more repressive policies, while emphasizing medical treatment for drug addicts.

31. Responding to the representative of Sri Lanka, he said that while repression was indeed necessary, priority should be given to persuading farmers to grow alternative crops, rather than imprisoning them. Concerning cannabis, he cited the example of Morocco, the world's biggest producer, where the Office was endeavouring to promote development. It did not suffice to give seeds to farmers; they also must be trained in new activities and encouraged to set up production cooperatives, to show mutual solidarity and to engage in legal activities. They must also be provided with outlets for their production, including international outlets. The resulting value added would ensure that they had sufficient income so that they did not go back to illicit crops.

32. He regretted being unable to provide figures for the amounts spent on combating trafficking. For purposes of comparison, he recalled that $900 billion were spent worldwide on arms purchases every year, but only $60 billion were spent on development assistance, and only a third of that amount was devoted to the most needy population groups. More money was spent on repression than on controlling demand for drugs and preventing addiction. The Office was also endeavouring to make recommendations in the areas of prevention and therapy. As for the use of military operations to eliminate drug-producing crops, the Office had advocated such operations in Afghanistan, in agreement with the Security Council and the North Atlantic Council, since the current Government did not have the means to conduct the necessary operations.

33. **Mr. Mahtab** (India), noting that drug trafficking was now a source of income not only for criminals but also for terrorists, asked what measures were being taken to deal with the problem.

34. **Ms. Matos** (Venezuela) asked what financial mechanisms existed to help developing countries in their fight against drugs, and what mechanisms had been created by the Office, in the framework of shared responsibility among States, to reduce supply rather than demand.

35. **Mr. Iskandarov** (Azerbaijan) raised the issue of criminal organizations or separatist groups which took control of part of the territory of certain sovereign States following the collapse of the previous regime, as had been the case after the break-up of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, in order to engage in various criminal activities such as drug trafficking. He asked what measures were being taken by the Office to assess the operations and activities of such organizations or groups and their ability to use drug trafficking and other criminal activities to generate income, taking advantage of the fact that the territories under their control were not under that of the national authorities in the State concerned, or of the international community.

36. **Mr. Costa** (Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime) said that a recent study on typologies of terrorist financing had shown that over the past 30 years, drug money had been used to finance all or part of the activities of terrorist groups. In Afghanistan, insurgent groups were financing their activities by means of income from heroin trafficking, and for every consignment of heroin leaving the country there was an incoming shipment of weapons. International cooperation was strong in relation to the surveillance of routes used by traffickers, but many countries remained silent.

37. Responding to the question from the delegation of Venezuela, he recalled that some 30 years previously, drugs had been produced in a certain number of developing countries and consumed in a group of developed countries. Production had since spread to rich, even very rich countries, in respect of both organic crops and synthetic drugs. Consumption was no longer limited to the rich countries; hence the notion of shared responsibility in the fight against drugs. The Office's budget was 90 per cent dependent on voluntary contributions; it therefore encouraged the partners of the developing countries to give them direct financial assistance or to provide contributions to the Office, which would then use them to help the countries concerned, which were divided into various categories. As for middle-income countries which had greater experience in combating drug trafficking, and which in some cases were members of the Security Council, permanent or otherwise, the Office was supplying them with advisory services and offering its know-how.

38. The Office shared the Azerbaijani delegation's concerns and acknowledged that criminals were often the first to profit from conflict within a country or region by engaging in trafficking of all kinds, especially if financial gain was involved, whether from oil or drugs. The Office was alarmed by this problem

and had sent a fact-finding mission to the region, referred to by the representative of Azerbaijan, to study possible measures for eradicating all the forms of trafficking that occurred there.

39. **Mr. Stelzer** (Austria) stressed the important standard-setting role of the Office in the negotiation of conventions such as the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the United Nations Convention against Corruption. He asked the Office what other measures and strategies it intended to adopt in an effort to combat human trafficking more effectively, since the war on the scourges of terrorism, corruption and drugs was too important to be lost.

40. **Mr. Costa** (Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime) replied that the Office intended, in collaboration with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, to publish an annual report on trafficking in persons and referred to the existence of the Global Programme against Trafficking in Human Beings and of a Special Rapporteur on the question. In 2002, the Office had also launched a large-scale awareness campaign on the problem in the form of television spots aired across the world. However, that campaign necessitated a large financial effort on the part of the television networks, which were asked to donate airtime costing millions of dollars. The spots displayed toll-free numbers so that persons who knew of cases of trafficking in human beings or who were victims themselves could report them to the authorities. The Office was helping the authorities of some countries affected by the problem to amend their legislation, particularly for the protection of victims, many of them foreigners, and ensure that the victims were not considered clandestine and therefore expelled. It also helped victims return to their countries of origin by giving them a small subsidy to help bring some degree of normality back to their lives; it also offered a witness-protection programme for those willing to testify against the syndicates. However, those actions were but a part of larger-scale efforts. He called on all countries that had not yet done so to ratify the Additional Protocol to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, designed to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons, especially women and children.

41. **Mr. Thepkanjana** (Thailand) said that his Government, convinced of the importance of such congresses for international cooperation in the fight against crime, would shortly be hosting the Eleventh United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, which would take place in very favourable conditions, in view of the recent entry into force of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Additional Protocols to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons, especially women and children, and against the smuggling of migrants by land, sea and air. In that connection, he was hopeful that the third additional protocol, against the illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms, their parts and components and ammunition, and the United Nations Convention against Corruption would soon enter into force and would buttress those other important instruments of international criminal law.

42. Technological advances enabled criminals to launder money, commit large-scale fraud and attack computer systems with impunity. The world was currently threatened by new, unimaginable forms of criminal behaviour, and organized crime had expanded to ever-wider areas and become more transnational in nature. Since 11 September 2001, those new forms of crime and the linkages among them and among their perpetrators had cast a cloak of fear over the world, with negative repercussions on economic and social development, and governments were being challenged to do more. The Eleventh Congress would provide the opportunity to draw on the lessons learned from achievements and from the deficiencies identified with regard to crime prevention and criminal justice. In that connection, he observed that the General Assembly had decided that each congress would adopt a single declaration containing recommendations derived from the deliberations of the high-level segment, the round tables and the workshops, to be submitted to the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice for its consideration. Accordingly, given that the Commission, at its thirteenth session, had recommended the adoption by the General Assembly of a draft resolution acknowledging the relevance of the recommendations of the four regional preparatory meetings for the Eleventh Congress, Thailand had formulated a first draft of the Bangkok Declaration, which it hoped would reflect consensus among Member States and set clear, ambitious objectives, notably regarding the adoption of national crime-prevention and criminal-justice strategies, improved coordination of activities, and strengthened cooperation among governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and civil society.

43. Inviting all countries to attend the Eleventh Congress, his delegation emphasized the necessity of making further progress for an effective war on crime, so as to ensure that future generations lived in a better world.

44. **Mr. Srithirath** (Lao People's Democratic Republic) said that illicit drug production, trafficking and abuse, as well as other related crimes, including terrorism, corruption and human trafficking, threatened security, stability and development.

45. The National Strategy adopted in 2000 to eliminate opium from his country had yielded very significant results: between 1998 and 2004 nearly 75 per cent of opium poppy cultivation had been eliminated. In view of the needs of some 28,000 identified opium addicts, national production in 2004 was of little international significance. Those gains could be translated into significant cost savings in the law-enforcement outlays of countries to which those opiates were sent, in comparison with which the cost of sustaining alternative livelihoods was relatively small. Nonetheless, the assistance provided by the international community was insufficient for the development of suitable alternative activities, especially in countries like the Lao People's Democratic Republic, where opium was produced in isolated mountain regions populated mostly by ethnic groups.

46. Opium was produced in two thirds of the poorest districts, and in seven out of the ten priority poorest districts, in the Lao People's Democratic Republic. Thus, assistance for alternative development was also assistance for poverty eradication and, by the same token, for the prevention of crime, including trafficking in human beings.

47. The rapid spread of amphetamine-type stimulants, especially among the young, was of grave concern. Data for 2004 showed that the Lao People's Democratic Republic was one of the main transit routes from a neighbouring country for that type of drug and for heroin. A national drug demand reduction strategy had been approved in 2003 and community-based approaches in prevention, treatment and rehabilitation had been initiated, but needed to be urgently extended and expanded.

48. Rates of HIV/AIDS and injection drug use were still low in the Lao People's Democratic Republic but, since the country was at high risk owing to the situation in the neighbouring countries, comprehensive initiatives were essential. With encouragement from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the Government was ensuring that agencies dealing with drug abuse and HIV/AIDS worked closely together for greater synergies.

49. The Lao People's Democratic Republic had ratified the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances and had requested the assistance of UNODC in the drafting of legislation and related implementation strategies. A nationwide precursor control action programme had been launched, the anti-money-laundering bill had been passed and bilateral, multilateral and regional cooperation agreements concluded in accordance with the goals set at the twentieth special session of the General Assembly.

50. Organized crime and terrorism respected no boundaries and constituted a global problem. Within the framework of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Lao People's Democratic Republic was a party to seven of the 12 instruments relating to terrorism and to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

51. Finally, donors were urged to provide technical support and funding for the organization of alternative activities, the lasting eradication of opium and the avoidance of problems having to do with illicit drugs HIV/AIDS, poverty, crime, human trafficking and corruption which threatened the Lao people and the region as a whole.

52. **Mr. Xie Bohua** (China) welcomed the entry into force of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime which China had ratified in 2003 with its two additional protocols. The Convention would encourage international cooperation in the fight against corruption. In that area, China had concluded many bilateral treaties on mutual legal assistance and stood prepared to cooperate further with the international community to secure the speedy entry into force of the United Nations Convention against Corruption. Nationally, legislative, judicial and legal measures had also been taken to create an enabling environment for fighting corruption with due respect for democratic principles.

53. After thanking UNODC for its contribution to China's efforts to control narcotics, he said that, in spite of the progress made since 1998, the situation

was far from satisfactory, as could be seen from the report of the Secretary-General (A/59/188). Narcotics production and trafficking were developing fast and new drugs were emerging on the market. The number of drug addicts remained high and they were bearing the brunt of the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

54. He also observed that drug trafficking was often linked to such forms of transnational crime as terrorism and money-laundering. All countries should, therefore, adhere to the principles of international solidarity and collective responsibility and cooperate in the fight against narcotics and related crimes and promote the search for substitution activities. In that regard, the developed countries should take measures to reduce demand and to provide financial and technical assistance to developing countries. The Government of China had formulated an inclusive and balanced national strategy for narcotics control and mobilized the whole of Chinese society in that struggle. Thanks to educational programmes and the promotion of substitution activities, the number of drug addicts had decreased and many communities had been freed from the scourge of narcotics, with a significant reduction in related crime. From 1998 to 2003, China had suppressed 546,000 drug-related crimes, arrested 250,000 traffickers, confiscated 51 tonnes of heroin, 52 tonnes of crystal methamphetamine, 14 tonnes of opium, and 1,412 tonnes of precursors and destroyed more than 500 acres of illicit opium poppy crops. Since 2000, the Government had instituted a policy which granted preferential access to the Chinese market for foreign substitution-activity products, which were exempted from customs duty amounting to US$ 2.4 million every year.

55. Internationally, China had actively participated in activities sponsored by the United Nations International Drug Control Programme and other competent international organizations. It encouraged the development of regional machinery such as the cooperation arrangement with Burma, Laos and Thailand to address the problem of narcotics. China remained extremely concerned by the scope of the problem in Afghanistan and was participating in the relevant cooperation programmes. Among other examples, it had signed with six other countries the Kabul Declaration on Good Neighbourliness with respect to drugs control and concluded many bilateral cooperation agreements in that area.

56. *Ms. Groux (Switzerland) Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.*

57. **Mr. Mpundu** (Zambia), speaking on behalf of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), said that Madagascar, a SADC candidate country, associated itself with his statement. SADC was concerned by the growing global problems of international crime and the socio-economic effects of illicit drugs.

58. As indicated by the Secretary-General in his report (A/59/188), there were about 200 million drug users worldwide and, since 2002, over 60 per cent of countries surveyed were showing either no change or an increase in drug abuse. Transnational crime was becoming increasingly sophisticated, in particular cybercrime, challenging existing national, regional and global control measures. SADC welcomed the entry into force of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its two additional protocols and hailed the success of the first Conference of States Parties. It hoped that the third additional protocol, would soon also come into force. SADC had its own related protocol, which was already being applied after being signed and ratified by a majority of SADC member States.

59. SADC also welcomed the adoption of the United Nations Convention against Corruption, which it urged all Member States to sign and ratify. Again, SADC had its own anti-corruption protocol and had adopted a set of effective preventive and deterrent measures. The offer of technical support for the implementation of binding instruments was of crucial importance and his appreciation went to UNODC for the efforts it had been making since the previous session of the General Assembly with particular reference to legislative assistance, capacity-building and the adoption of a regional declaration and plan of action against human trafficking. In that regard, SADC urged the international community to support the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Fund.

60. Poverty and regional conflicts were making crime and drug control efforts much more complex and even more urgent, and care must be taken to adapt solutions to the specific circumstances of each country. SADC supported the work of the United Nations African Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, which was experiencing financial difficulties and needed the assistance of the

international community. Welcoming the forthcoming Eleventh United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, he concluded by stressing that the rule of law was a precondition for sustainable economic development.

61. **Ms. Bakker** (Netherlands), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that the candidate countries Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey and Croatia, the stabilization and association and potential candidate countries Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and Serbia and Montenegro, as well as the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland and Norway, members of the European Economic Space, associated themselves with her statement. The European Union gave priority to the fight against crime in all its forms, with respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and recalled that poverty, marginalization and inequity often bred crime. For that reason, the efforts being made by the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme to foster international cooperation in that area should be encouraged. In order to become an area of freedom, security and justice, the European Union had taken a series of initiatives to combat human trafficking and cybercrime, to confiscate the proceeds of crime and to institute new measures to enhance cooperation among police forces, customs and judicial authorities.

62. At the international level, the European Union welcomed the entry into force of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its two protocols and called on all States that had not yet done so to ratify those instruments, as well as the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition. The European Union had actively participated in the first Conference of Parties to the Convention and welcomed the adoption of its 2005 programme of work. It also called on all States that had not yet done so to sign and ratify the United Nations Convention against Corruption in order for it to enter into force as soon as possible, and was willing to assist States wishing assistance in that area.

63. The European Union welcomed the results of the thirteenth session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, which had outlined the importance of the link between the rule of law and development, and endorsed the programme of work adopted for the Eleventh United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice. The single declaration to be adopted on that occasion should contain recommendations for consideration by the Commission and should address issues of global relevance in a concise and positive manner.

64. The European Union attached great importance to international and regional cooperation in the fight against terrorism and supported United Nations counter-terrorism activities, including those of the Counter-Terrorism Committee, the Al-Qaida and Taliban Sanctions Committee, and the Terrorism Prevention Branch of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). It strongly believed that resolution 1373 (2001) and the other pertinent Security Council resolutions, as well as the 12 United Nations conventions and protocols on terrorism played a central role. In that regard, the European Union observed that reservations about core articles diminished the effectiveness of those instruments. The European Union also supported the negotiations on the draft Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism and the adoption of the draft International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism.

65. In tackling the drug problem, it was necessary to adopt an integrated and balanced approach involving both supply and demand reduction and governmental and non-governmental actors. In that connection, the European Union commended the launching of the campaign entitled "Drugs: treatment works", on the occasion of the International Day against Drug Abuse and Drug Trafficking, and the launching of the *World Drug Report*. Demand reduction called for preventive action based on sound scientific evidence, improved availability of treatment and reduction of drug-related health and social consequences, including those relating to HIV/AIDS. In that regard, the European Union welcomed the efforts undertaken by the relevant United Nations organizations to study the effectiveness of drug-related HIV/AIDS prevention programmes and looked forward to a progress report on the problem at the next session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and to the setting of guidelines for pharmacological and psychosocial treatment of persons dependent on opioids. Accurate and comparable data were essential for setting up effective programmes; the European Union also welcomed UNODC efforts to establish key indicators. Concerned by the escalation of the problem of synthetic drugs, the demand for which was prevalent among young persons, the European Union welcomed

the UNODC publication entitled "*Ecstasy and Amphetamines: Global Survey 2003*" (United Nations publication, Sales No.: E.03.XI.15), which provided a first quantitative assessment of the extent of the problem. With regard to supply-reduction efforts, the issues identified at the twentieth special session of the General Assembly unfortunately remained highly relevant and the European Union was concerned about the connections between drug trafficking, organized crime and the financing of terrorism. It had therefore intensified its cooperation among Member States, but also with other countries and international organizations, as shown by the Framework decision on the European arrest warrant and the surrender procedures between the Member States and the cooperation agreement concluded between the European Police Office and UNODC.

66. Promotion of sustainable development played an essential role in the fight against drugs, especially in Afghanistan, and the European Union welcomed UNODC efforts in that field and subscribed to the principles laid down in the Berlin Declaration on Counter-Narcotics. The European Union supported the work of the International Narcotics Control Board to ensure compliance with existing treaties and to prevent the diversion of precursors, and stressed the need to make available the necessary financial resources for the Board to continue its work under Operation Purple, Operation Topaz and Operation Prism. For its part, the European Union had undertaken to formulate a new strategy in line with the principles set out at the twentieth special session, and firmly supported the work of UNODC. It welcomed the Office's new structure and its efforts for reform and results-based management made by the Executive Director.

67. **Mr. Swe** (Myanmar), citing the report of the Secretary-General (A/59/188), referred to the number of drug users worldwide and stressed that, while it was heartening that the *World Drug Report 2004* showed that drug use had slowed down significantly, 4.7 per cent of the most active and productive age group used drugs and that drug use clearly hindered development. The international community needed to redouble its efforts to achieve the goals set in the Political Declaration adopted at the twentieth special session of the General Assembly.

68. Myanmar supported the conclusions and recommendations of the Secretary-General and the catalytic role played by UNODC in mainstreaming drug-control issues by collecting relevant data and developing appropriate tools.

69. The *World Drug Report 2004* pointed out that in 2003 alone Myanmar had experienced a 24 per cent decline in opium production, which had fallen from 1,760 metric tons in 1996 to 810 metric tons in 2003, a trend that was expected to continue. In that regard, his country and the United States had been conducting joint annual opium-yield surveys, from which opium production in 2003 was estimated at no more than 483 metric tons. The figures from the tenth survey, conducted early in 2004, showed that poppy cultivation had declined by some 71 per cent between 1996 and 2003 and opium production by 81 per cent. Those significant results were due to the Government-formulated 15-year Narcotics Elimination Plan starting from fiscal year 1999-2000, and of which Myanmar had successfully implemented the first five-year phase through crop-substitution programmes implemented over the previous decade, development programmes providing alternative income for poppy growers, implementation of stringent money-laundering laws, seizure and destruction of drugs worth billions of dollars, anti-narcotic techniques training programmes, and cooperation with regional and international counter-narcotics agencies. The value of drugs seized and destroyed during the previous decade had been more than $14.452 million.

70. Statistics on tobacco smokers could not, however, be ignored, as the Executive Director of UNODC had pointed out; there were 1.3 billion smokers in the world, seven times the number of drug users, and tobacco claimed 25 times as many lives as drugs. Aware that the habit of drug addiction among young people often started with smoking, Myanmar had taken the proactive step of ratifying the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control in April 2004.

71. Trafficking in persons was a very grave issue confronting the international community and one that Myanmar had tackled through a comprehensive framework comprising national legislation, a national plan of action, high-level commitment and bilateral, regional and international cooperation. Myanmar had acceded to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its two protocols and was engaged in drafting national legislation against human trafficking, in accordance with that Convention. In conclusion, he said that, in order to strengthen regional cooperation, Myanmar would be hosting the

six-nation Coordinated Mekong Ministerial Initiative against Trafficking later that year and would continually enhance efforts to combat that crime.

72. In conclusion, he reiterated his Government's strong commitment to fighting the twin scourge of drugs and trafficking in persons and its willingness to cooperate with the international community.

73. **Mr. Farrar** (United States of America) said that his country was keenly aware that the subjects on the agenda ranked among the primary threats to international security and economic development. The interests of organized crime corrupted political institutions and were opposed to democratic accountability and the increasingly visible alliances between organized crime and terrorists constituted an immediate threat to the peace and safety of nations, to which it was essential to react quickly. The global economy could not meet the expectations of citizens if organized criminal activity continued to siphon off hundreds of billions of dollars annually. In a world more interconnected than ever, there was a diminishing margin of error in how one reacted to such transnational threats and the United States wished to assure other Member States that those issues ranked at the top of its foreign-policy priorities.

74. That commitment, he said, went beyond rhetoric. His country had assisted many other States, the United Nations and other international organizations in developing the capacities of criminal justice systems and law enforcement agencies through a broad array of technical assistance programmes. Since 2002, that assistance had totalled nearly $3 billion and the results obtained deserved to be mentioned, since they showed what mutual assistance could achieve.

75. In the western hemisphere, the countries of the Andean region had taken dramatic steps to reverse the vicious cycle of corruption and violence engendered by the international drug trade. In Colombia and other major drug-producing countries, the United States and the United Nations had assisted the authorities in eradicating coca and opium-poppy crops, with significant results. To the credit of the Colombian President and his Government, those crops had been reduced by one third over the previous two years, and that reduction would continue thanks to eradication operations and programmes to encourage alternative economic activities. He stressed that maintaining those achievements would require a sustained commitment on the part of the international community. His country reaffirmed its intention to continue to work with the Government and people of Colombia, who had suffered the consequences of drug-fuelled terrorism and aspired to a better future.

76. The United States was also committed to continuing its support to Colombia's neighbours and, being aware of the fragility of the success achieved, stressed the importance of efforts to lay the groundwork for a sustainable, regional, deep-seated and democratic solution to the destruction and terror connected with the drug trade.

77. That logic extended beyond the western hemisphere, and particularly to the situation in Afghanistan, where opium poppy cultivation compromised progress on economic and political reconstruction. On the eve of the presidential elections in Afghanistan, the United States would continue to work with the Afghan people to encourage the eradication of drug crops and support the development of alternative livelihoods. Past efforts had been too modest and the Government of the United States was working with its international partners, particularly the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, as leader in the development of drug-control policies, and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), towards achieving further results. The United States also supported Germany's efforts towards creating a professional and democratic police force to enhance security conditions on the ground, including through the construction and rehabilitation of Afghan police training facilities.

78. Meeting those challenges in Afghanistan was one of the highest priorities of the United States Government and the effort extended to Afghanistan's neighbours most directly affected by the production of and traffic in illicit drugs from that country. As in the Andean region, that traffic had to be approached from a regional perspective.

79. The United Nations had played a vital role in shepherding efforts to create an international legal regime to combat all forms of transnational organized crime, highlighted by two landmark conventions. After recalling briefly the objectives of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, he said that his country was pleased to offer its technical and financial support to UNODC in its efforts to promote internationally the ratification and

implementation of the Convention and its supplementary protocols.

80. **Mr. Khalid** (Pakistan) acknowledged that, in view of the multiple forms of crime, the political will and effective implementation of policies at the national level were just as important as international cooperation. Advances in communication technology and relaxed border controls, he said, were advantageous to organized crime. It was becoming increasingly difficult for States to deal with criminal activity that took place beyond their borders, yet adversely affected their interests. Hence the need for increased international cooperation.

81. The United Nations had a central role to play in that regard and the international instruments already adopted provided a sufficient legal basis for international activity under the Organization's guidance. Universal adherence to and faithful implementation of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, its three protocols and the three conventions on drug control remained imperative for success against the twin menace of drugs and crime.

82. Pakistan commended the excellent work being done by UNODC on the ratification and implementation of the instruments dealing with the various facets of crime, particularly its programmes against money-laundering, corruption and trafficking in persons, and appreciated the work of its Terrorism Prevention Branch.

83. As a front-line State, Pakistan was an active partner in the fight against that scourge and had joined in the consensus that had led to the adoption of Security Council resolution 1556 (2004), thus expressing its firm determination to participate in the action taken by the international community. While States needed to focus on strengthening their national capacities for combating terrorism, the international community, too, must assist those that so needed in developing their legal systems and law enforcement structures. Pakistan hoped that the Eleventh United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice would provide opportunities to discuss those and other issues.

84. The tendency of major donors towards project-specific contributions impeded the independent functioning of UNODC and it was therefore important, in order to enable the Office to fulfil its mandate, to increase its share of the regular budget and to urge donors to contribute more towards general-purpose funds rather than dictating the operations of the Office in accordance with their own priorities or political considerations.

85. Combating money-laundering and criminal economy constituted a major element of strategies against organized crime. Member States must examine the desirability of a stand-alone instrument against money-laundering, negotiated under the aegis of the United Nations. Pakistan had actively participated in the negotiations on the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Convention against Corruption, to both of which it was a signatory, and had introduced a number of legal and administrative reforms in key areas to prevent and combat the activities covered by those conventions. In 2002 an ordinance for the prevention and control of trafficking in human beings was promulgated which provided severe penalties for the perpetrators of several possible forms of trafficking in persons. Hundreds of cases had been investigated and many had already been brought before the courts for trial. To prevent identity-document fraud, Pakistan was introducing new features in national identity cards and machine-readable passports. Keeping a database of returning migrants had been proposed to make it possible to carry out studies with a view to taking effective measures against criminal groups involved in trafficking in persons. The Federal Investigation Agency had embarked on a number of innovative projects that were already showing results, such as the Automated Fingerprint Identification System, the Cyber Crime Unit, the Anti-Money-Laundering Unit and the Special Investigation Unit. Pakistan had also taken steps to enhance international cooperation and mutual legal assistance through agreements with other countries, including extradition agreements. It was pursuing a two-pronged strategy for preventing corruption, based on comprehensive legislation and the introduction of corporate management structures in major public-sector organizations. Thus, the National Accountability Bureau had been successful in reducing corruption within the country and had recovered over 160 billion rupees.

86. The Pakistani delegation remained convinced that despite unquestionable difficulties, political resolve at the national level and cooperation at the international level would permit positive results in the fight against

the drug problem. His country was playing a leading role in sensitizing the international community and had succeeded in eliminating illicit crops through a combination of law enforcement and alternative development initiatives. At the same time, Pakistan had been actively contributing to international efforts to stop the outflow of drugs from Afghanistan and the inflow of precursor chemicals, in order to prevent drug production.

87. While there were reasons to be optimistic, one had to be mindful of new patterns and trends, which necessitated timely action to guarantee the success of strategies against the world drug problem. Special attention must be devoted to the increase in illicit production, trafficking and abuse of synthetic drugs and their precursors. A sustained and multi-pronged national and international strategy must be the cornerstone of the fight against drugs and required addressing related menaces such as terrorism, money-laundering and violent crimes. To achieve those goals, Pakistan remained committed to forging effective international partnerships.

88. **Ms. Feller** (Mexico), reaffirming her country's firm adherence to international action, said that Mexico sought to promote the application of additional measures aimed at the implementation of plans of action adopted at the twentieth special session of the General Assembly and also supported the application of the Joint Ministerial Statement adopted by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs at its forty-sixth session, the tenor of which she recalled. Mexico devoted sizeable resources to fighting traffic in and the production and abuse of illicit drugs and the related crimes, such as money-laundering, smuggling, corruption, the arms trade and traffic in immigrants — resources that could be used to finance other development strategies.

89. The policies followed covered a variety of fields, such as scientific investigation, prevention, treatment and rehabilitation, as well as air, sea and land interception strategies. However, national efforts to combat drug traffic and other forms of criminal activity could bear fruit only if accompanied by concrete international measures. It was therefore essential for countries to remain faithful to the agreements connected with the action plan for the implementation of the political declaration and to institute stronger measures, taking into account the priorities set for 2008.

90. The Mexican delegation felt that the efforts of the international community should include public policies aimed at reducing and preventing not only demand, but also the street trade, which affected the population directly. Given the increase in the traffic in and consumption of amphetamines and their precursors, it was of paramount importance to develop measures for the detection and destruction of clandestine laboratories, including the detection of the manufacturing methods used.

91. Mexico reaffirmed its support for UNODC and the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) and their action against the global drug problem and was convinced that it was essential to continue to strengthen them, evincing the necessary political will to apply the measures and programmes emanating from them.

92. As in the past, Mexico would introduce in the Third Committee a draft resolution on international cooperation against the global drug problem based on an equitable and balanced approach, the principle of shared responsibility and respect for State sovereignty. It hoped to be able to count again on the support of other delegations in maintaining the full force and utility of the text.

93. Mexico had participated actively in the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and welcomed the establishment of the multi-year programme, in which specific issues connected with the Convention and the two protocols in force could be considered. It hoped that the second conference, to be held in 2005, would provide an opportunity for a more in-depth analysis and consideration of the follow-up mechanism of the Convention.

94. The speaker announced in conclusion that on 20 June 2004 her Government had deposited with the Secretary-General Mexico's instrument of ratification of the United Nations Convention against Corruption. Mexico appealed to States that had not already done so to sign or ratify the landmark Convention in order that it might enter into force as soon as possible.

95. **Mr. Bâzel** (Afghanistan) expressed his country's thanks to UNODC and its Executive Director for their active involvement in assisting the Government in formulating policies, establishing institutions, strengthening the law-enforcement and criminal justice systems and promoting alternative means of livelihood.

He pointed out that the Executive Director had visited Afghanistan several times to galvanize the anti-narcotic effort and find ways to strengthen regional cooperation in that field.

96. It was unfortunate that Afghanistan was one of the major producers of narcotics and that the production of amphetamine-type stimulants and synthetic drugs in other parts of the world was increasing. The destruction of the country's economic and agricultural structure and the collapse of State institutions after more than two decades of foreign aggression and conflict were the principal causes of the opium-production problem, which the Afghan Government could not tackle alone. The speaker recalled that it had been recognized by the General Assembly at its twentieth special session that the drug problem was a world problem. The responsibility for fighting it was shared, requiring an integrated and balanced approach in which demand reduction must be given as much importance as supply. Strong measures by the countries concerned to reduce the demand would contribute to a reduction of supply in the opiate-producing countries, but if the demand increased or remained unchanged, the supply of narcotics would continue, either from Afghanistan or from elsewhere.

97. His delegation wished to emphasize three important aspects of the drug problem in Afghanistan, the first of which was the Government's political will to combat the production, trafficking, processing and consumption of narcotics, as evidenced by the issuance over the previous two and one-half years of presidential decrees banning the cultivation and export of opium. Afghanistan, being cognizant of the link between drug trafficking, transnational organized crime and terrorist activities, considered the fight against the drug trade a national security question. The speaker said that the office of the National Security Advisor was supervising the National Drug Control Strategy signed by the President in May 2003 and that article 7 of the Afghan Constitution stipulated that narcotics production and traffic were prohibited. The Afghan Government was participating in regional efforts to strengthen coordination and cooperation. It had hosted the International Counter-Narcotic Conference on Afghanistan in February 2004 and had signed, together with its six neighbours, the Berlin Declaration on Counter-Narcotics within the framework of the Kabul Good Neighbourly Relations Declaration.

98. The second aspect related to the importance of re-establishing institutions and law-enforcement centres throughout the country. In that connection, Afghanistan was thankful to the Governments of the United Kingdom, the United States, Germany and Italy for their much-needed support. That contribution was already bearing fruit, inasmuch as Afghanistan had established counter-narcotics institutions and adopted relevant laws; moreover, a counter-narcotics police force was being established and had been active in different parts of the country, confiscating poppy fields and destroying heroine laboratories. As reported by the Afghan Ministry of the Interior on 29 September 2004, the special police force had launched successful operations in Nangarhar province, during which some 61 tons of narcotics and chemicals used in producing heroin and 47 heroin-producing laboratories had been destroyed. The activities of traffickers had thus been thwarted and drug prices had consequently fallen.

99. The third aspect to be emphasized related to the link between poverty and drug-crop cultivation, as acknowledged by General Assembly resolution 53/115, and to the distinction that must be made between the needs of poor farmers suffering the effects of war and drought, on the one hand, and the greed of the drug mafia that profited from that lucrative illicit business, on the other hand.

100. After decades of wars of aggression and conflict, Afghanistan was left with one of the highest rates of poverty in its history and was in need of international assistance to tackle the country's drug problem. As shown in the case of other countries, in order to yield effective results such assistance must be long-term.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.